K
425 used the word uthoni to express the principle of the bond, and still
196 so use it, but with a narrowed application, at least among the young,
571 who generally apply it to the marriage bond between two families and to nothing else. Thoni is a very widespread stem in Bantu languages and has the essential meaning "shyness," usually rendered "shame" (1). Thoni itself means shame or shyness in Kikuyu. In

1. Cf. Johnston, op. cit.: "this, which is one of the most widespread and universal of the Bantu word-roots, seems to be connected with a root meaning "eye," "face," coupled with the -ni locative—'in the eyes', "in the face'

the form uthon it implies the attitude to be adopted to one's relatives-in-law, that is, the people of other groups to whom one is bound by a spiritual bond. This attitude is an aspect of the common custom of "avoidance," which implies a regulation of behavior to suit the circumstances, rather than evasion. The relationship involves an intinate acquaintance, but requires reciprocal respect as well—a proper balance must be struck between the two. Formerly exchanges in the continuity-enabling class always entailed uthoni; mutuality of function was imperative. Co-operation was the essence of uthoni, a co-operation based on an actual [p. 137] need of continuity in which both parties played their part. The "seller" of a girl expected her to become a wife and mother, not just a
K cultivator or a plaything; it was her prospective children who were
425 really "sold" and their begetting meant co-operation. Even a cow
571 could not be sold outright; when she had borne a heifer sired in the
D buyer's herd and borne it "in the buyer's hand" she had to be re-
425 turned. (1) When a Dorobo "bought" a piece of land he could not
571

1. This does not apply to all the tribes. There are two forms of uthoni cattle-exchange in the Unit. But in neither could a cow be sold outright.

"buy" it just for speculation or accumulation of a form of wealth

D
425
571
K
571
425

he fancied; on the contrary he had to use it, put up honey-barrels, set his traps and dig his game-pits, occupy it beneficially and send a share of all its produce to the group-in-law who "sold" it to him.

In theory an uthoni never ceases unless for any reason it is found to be unworkable. (2) If there remains some continuity-enabling

> 2. As when a marriage is dissolved through incompatibility or barrenness, for instance.

object in the "buyer's" hands—the children of a marriage or a heifer calf or land—the uthoni still remains intact, although it weakens with the memory of the link which first conjoined the parties, and finally, of course, fades out entirely with that memory. (3) As an

> 3. The function of memory (individual or group or tribal—"traditional") is of importance in the formulation of beliefs and customs in primitive illiterate peoples. There is a relationship between the remembrance of a thing and its existence. We have already noticed this relationship in its effect on spiritual ideas. It has a similar effect on the idea of reincarnation—the rebirth of a deceased grandfather as a child, for instance, is much more real when its parents see a likeness; a general theory is less impressive. In this paragraph we see the effect of the relationship on the duration of continuity-enabling bonds. A similar effect can be perceived in the rules pertaining to exogamy in many tribes; if the pooled memory of the groups concerned reveals no common blood the marriage can proceed.

active principle it tends to vanish when the formal payments have been made in full and the object in the continuity-enabling class first "purchased" is no longer there. When the uthoni cow has been returned the uthoni might be deemed to cease, because the link between the parties is too slight a one to last; when a woman